

4894

*The Hypocritical Fast, with its Design
and Consequences.*

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED

On WEDNESDAY Evening,

FEBRUARY 21, 1781,

In N O R W I C H.

By R. D A V I D. *k*

— *When the wicked beareth rule the people mourn.*

— *The wicked shall not be unpunished.*

*The triumphing of the wicked is short; and the joy of the
hypocrite but for a moment.*

SOLOMON.

— *The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction.* JOB.

N O R W I C H :

Printed by J. CROUSE ; Sold by M. BOOTH, in the Market-
place, by the Author; WILLIAM EATON, YAR-
MOUTH, and J. BUCKLAND, in LONDON.

(Price S I X - P E N C E .)



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THIS SERMON,
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
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THE AUTHOR.

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THE author is not so vain as to suppose that this sermon, has any thing to recommend it to the world but the important truths it contains, the plain manner in which they are handled, and the good intention of the preacher. He is aware, that many will condemn it, because it is chiefly political. He thinks it unnecessary to make any apology to such gentlemen;---if they don't like it, they may leave it. It was his design to speak on this subject;---and being unwilling either to offend or disappoint any that chose to attend, he gave public notice of it the Sabbath-day before.---When he studied and delivered this discourse, he had not the most distant thoughts of publishing it. The subject, and the method in which it was treated made a great stir in the city :---Some few found fault, and others either thro' design, or ignorance, misrepresented the whole. However, when several of his friends who were present, expressed their approbation, and requested him to publish it; he thought proper, to please them, expose those that had misrepresented it, and caution all against hypocrisy, to print it. And now he leaves it to the consideration of the impartial public and the blessing of God.

GLAN-Y-IAR,
March 23, 1781.



A

S E R M O N, &c.

I KING, xxi, 9, 10.

-----Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people : and set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king : then carry him out, and stone him that he may die.

) I (foundation for, and hastened the ruin of him-
) (self and all his family. This wicked king,
) (was not contented with the portion which

 God had given him in his providence, but wished to deprive one of his faithful subjects of a part of his paternal inheritance. It must be owned, that his proposal at the first view of it appears very fair ; but nevertheless, it was contrary to the express command of God*. And therefore Naboth could not comply†. This respect for the law of God in the *subject*, greatly displeased the Sovereign. He retired to his palace, *laid him down on his bed, turned away his face, and would eat no bread*‡.

Upon

* Lev. 25, 23, 28, compared with Numb. 36, 6, 7.

† v. 2, 3.

‡ v. 4.

Upon this the Queen came into the royal apartments, and enquired into the cause of the king's distress? His majesty informed her in the most pathetic manner*. She immediately began to comfort him with the ideas of kingly power, and we may also suppose, *of the divine right of princes*; and exhorted him to *arise, eat bread and let his heart be merry* :---that she would give him *the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite*†. This, it is true, was talking *big*, as crowned heads were wont to do formerly : but at the same time we are bound to say, if we speak the truth on this occasion, that it was a plain proof of her *folly, injustice, arbitrary disposition, want of regard for the law of God and the right of the subject*. For all here present this evening, have as much right to dispose of the lands, lives and all the property of their neighbours---as she had to do this. It is true, she had the will and power to do it, which you have not. If we may judge of the thoughts of princes by their conduct, it seems, that they deemed every thing *lawful* which they ~~would~~^{could} effect, in *that age*. As the Queen had promised to give the vineyard of Naboth to the king, she was determined to make her word good ; and therefore laid a sure plan to effect it. Agreeable to this plan, *she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent them unto the elders, and to the nobles that were in his city dwelling with Naboth*‡. This Queen's conduct, may serve to put us in mind of the *papistical Queen of Charles the First*. She thought proper upon the old plan of royal power, to give orders to put the *Irish Protestants* to death. This she did in her husband's name, and sealed them with his seal. No doubt, but she had *the good of the church* in view throughout the whole.

This

* v. 5, 6.

† v. 7.

‡ v. 8.

This chapter, don't furnish us with the names of the *nobles* that were ordered to enforce the royal pleasure against Naboth ; but it is very evident, from their conduct, that they were the N--ths, S-ndw-ches, G-r-m-nes, H-lsb-ghs and St-rm--nts of that day.

The contents of the letters sent to those noblemen, you have in the words first read,---*Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people : and set two men, sons of Belial, before him to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king : and then carry him out, and stone him that he may die.* Such were the royal commands of Jezebel ;---and such was the complying temper of the *ministry*, that they soon put them in execution*. It seems that the *court* then, was as fond of the cursed doctrine of *passive obedience and non-resistance*, as any of the opposers of the GLORIOUS REVOLUTION, and the accession of the BRUNSWICK FAMILY to the throne of Great Britain, have been since ; and the friends of the *Pretender* still are. This doctrine is not the better for being old ;---for by holding it, the throne of *Ahab* formerly and of the *Stuarts* since, was *overturned*. But then, tho' crowned heads formerly held this *silly doctrine*, yet, it would be very unfair to infer from *thence* that kings in this enlightened age are fond of it. You know, that my text leads me to speak of things done near three thousand years ago.

We shall now attend to the words of the text, in the order that they stand before us, and the consequences of complying with the arbitrary commands of Jezebel herein.

-----*Proclaim a fast*,---It is worthy of observation,
that

* v. 12, 14.

that *fasting*, when done voluntarily supposes, a deep sense of sin. And if we believe people to be in earnest when they fast, we take the rest for granted. Their abstaining from food, &c. is a tacit acknowledgment, that by their sins, they have forfeited all their right to the common comforts of life. And sure enough, it is an important truth. A *truth*, which if it was more impressed on our minds, under divine influence, would always tend to keep us humble before the Lord; and make us thankful for his mercies of every kind, however small our portion of them might be, in comparison of that enjoyed by some of our fellow-creatures, who are equally sinful with ourselves. And it would always prevent our repining against God in any of our troubles.*

The very act of *fasting* voluntarily, supposes, that the *fasters* are anxious for the interposition of Heaven on their behalf; and the manifestation of God's forgiving love to them. If it were not so, *fasting* would be painful in itself, without the least prospect of gain.--- This surely, would be very unreasonable; for the human race have afflictions and troubles enough from other quarters, without becoming their own *tormentors*. Besides, it can't reasonably be supposed, that to their *fasts*, they would add prayer; unless, they were desirous that the Lord would appear for them. Hear what the King of *Nineveh* says upon this subject,---*Let neither man nor beast taste any thing; let them not feed, nor drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God:---Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not †?*

To

* Pun. 103, 1—5, 8, 14.

† Jonah, 3, 7—9

To this we may add, that fasting, when done sincerely supposes, a firm resolution to reform that which was amiss in the conduct before. Without this, *fasting* would be an act of *solemn mockery!* And therefore instead of doing any good, either to the soul or the body, would hasten the eternal ruin of both; as is evident from the case of Ahab*. When the king of *Nineveh* proclaimed a fast, he was bent on the reformation of that which was amiss in his court, as well as in the rest of his dominions. Therefore he had the following clause inserted in the royal proclamation,--*Let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands*†. The scriptures do not inform us whether there was a change in the *ministry* at *Nineveh* after this fast, or not; but there can be no great doubt of it, from the words of the proclamation, if they did not *reform*.

If a proper view has been given of fasting in general, we may presume from this account to judge of the sincerity, or insincerity of the *fasters* in this kingdom on the day past. If from the highest to the lowest, an universal reformation should take place; if men in power cease to *oppress, debauch and ruin* the *innocent*; and those under them in office, with the rest of the subjects at large, learn to *do unto others, as they would wish others to do unto them*, in similar circumstances:---then we may say, that it was a *sincere fast* indeed. And as such, acceptable in the sight of God thro' *Jesus Christ*. But on the contrary, if high and low continue to *swear, take the name of God in vain, get drunk, break the Sabbath, oppress one another and encourage every species of wicked-*

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ness:

* v. 19,--24.

† Jonah, 3, 8.

ness :---then we may with the greatest truth pronounce this fast, an act of SOLEMN MOCKERY! And therefore highly offensive in the sight of God.

It may not be improper to observe here, that it was common for individuals in ancient times to fast on particular occasions. Thus we find that *Cornelius* being sensible of his own ignorance, and desirous to be instructed by the Lord in the way of duty, *fasted* and *prayed* in his house. And from what follows, we find that his conduct pleased the Lord*. S. Paul writing to the Corinthians upon this subject says, *Defraud you not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer*†;---From these and such like passages, we see that it is not only lawful, but useful to fast under the New Testament.

It seems formerly, that a part of a nation fasted on account of some particular calamity, that either had befallen them, or that they feared would befall them.---It is very likely that the fast mentioned in the text was one of this sort; for we don't find that it was observed in any part of the Empire, but, in the city where Naboth lived. Tho' it is my intention by no means to criticise upon the text, yet I think it necessary to observe, that some chuse to render this part of it thus,---*Call an Assembly*,---and among other considerations, assign this for so doing, viz. "Because they could see no reason to suppose that Jezebel was fond of fasting." But these Gentlemen, seem to have forgotten, that it was only an *hypocritical fast*: and consequently that there is no occasion to suppose, she was fond of fasting herself; but only, that she was fond of *Naboth's vineyard*, and determined to secure it *for a garden of herbs* to the king‡.

There

* Acts 10, 30, 31.

† 1 Cor. 7, 5.

‡ v. 2.

There are likewise many instances on record of whole nations fasting at once. This has often been the case in England; and the Day which is now past, you all know, was set apart by our AUGUST SOVEREIGN for the purpose of *fasting* and *prayer*. The most reverend the Archbishops, and the right reverend the Bishops, were commanded by the king to compose a form of prayer suitable to the occasion. This was done, and every parish in this city had *eighteen penny-worth of prayers*, including the royal proclamation, to assist them in their devotion, and to ask of God such blessings as are suited to the case of the nation at large. However, the care of the King and the piety of the Bishops could not prevent some ill-natured persons to insinuate, that as the *right reverend Fathers in God* had by their sermons, &c. encouraged this *American war*,---it was the least thing they could have done, to compose a *form of prayer* for the fast day, and distribute it gratis throughout the kingdom, by way of atonement for the distress into which the nation is brought by their advice;---That if they did not like this way, they might have sold them for half the money, and got handsomely by the sale too.-And if they were obliged to shew the great pains, trouble and expence this composition had put them to, as well as its intrinsic value, by the high price of it; yet, when their dignity and piety had been sufficiently established, by the excellency, great price and rapid sale of the prayer; they might have given the profits of it towards supporting the poor that are out of work in consequence of this war,---or some other laudable purpose:---remembering *that it is more blessed to give than to receive**. But then, think you my friends, that it is reasonable for the laity, to dictate to

* Acts 20, 35.

the clergy? Do you not see the presumption of secular men in attempting to *censure* the Guides of their souls? Nay, is it not impious in them to do it?

To what has been already advanced we may add, that sometimes the *higher powers* have proclaimed a fast merely to give the colour of religion, to their *wicked purposes*. This was the case of Jezebel, she did not think fit to call in the help of the *military power* to rid her of her enemy; but chose rather to give all the royal proceedings an air of religion. The Jews in this respect followed her example in after ages, for the Prophet addressing them on this subject, cries out, *Behold ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness**;---And there can be no great doubt, but this has been the case in some *popish reigns* in *England*.---It is not unlikely also, but in this censorious age, many will be wicked enough to add, *and since*. However, it should be remembered, that God detests all *hypocritical fasts*, as we shall soon see.

And set Naboth on high among the people:---i. e. as if Jezebel had said, give him place according to his illustrious birth in your assembly. Let not the least reason be given him to suspect your design, lest he should be absent on the appointed day; and you my worthy Lords be put to the unnecessary pain and trouble of using coercive measures to bring him there. This might alarm the nation, and cause those *republicans*, who stile themselves *patriots* and *friends of civil liberty* to take the part of this *stubborn subject*; and thereby render our royal purpose abortive. Or rather, the sense of the queen may be, bring Naboth to the bar of your assembly. Let it be seen by your firm and steadfast conduct from the first moment the fast is over, that by the special

* Isai. 58, 4.

cial favor and extraordinary condescension of Heaven towards you this day, in answer to your fervent prayers ---you have discovered that *Naboth the Jezreelite* is guilty of the highest crimes that any mortal can commit. Let all the assembly see that he is a person devoted to destruction.---That you are determined to punish sin where-ever you find it ; and thus shew that your royal master has nothing so much in view as a general reformation. That the most honorable the privy-council, and all his majesty's ministers of state will stand by, countenance and support all who chuse to accuse him of *high-treason*. Let your words in private, and conduct and looks in public shew to all who are inclined to appear against him on this occasion, that they do the *most essential service* to their Sovereign Lord the king. Give them every possible assurance, that you will not on any consideration punish his accusers for *perjury*.---Thus then you see, that the queen was not ignorant of the laws of the land she lived in. Her precaution was very necessary, for thus it is written in the law of God,---*And behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother : then shall ye do unto him, as he thought to have done unto his brother** :---However, as the queen was determined to put the finishing stroke to Naboth's affair as soon as possible, she did not chuse to rest upon uncertainties, about the evidence that might be wanted against him. She knew very well that her beloved servants in the ministry, were men on whom she might rely for the performance of any *wicked action* within the compass of their abilities, having long ago like their master *sold themselves to work iniquity†* : but then, she could not be sure of any more in this fasting assembly. Therefore she thought proper
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* Deut. 19, 18, 19.

† v. 25.

to add in the royal instructions against Naboth,---and set two men, sons of Belial before him, to bear witness against him,---It ought to be remembered here, that the queen in all her measures was determined to maintain the appearance of equity. The law of God says, *At the mouth of two---or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death, be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness, he shall not be put to death**. Therefore Jezebel having her eye on this command, ordered them to provide two men before hand, that would be willing to serve their king at any rate. In this she was determined to make sure work of it, lest there could not be found in the whole assembly any that would be dutiful enough to do it. However, tho' the queen was careful to maintain the *appearance of justice* throughout all her proceedings; yet, you may be assured, that she did not forget her own concerns in this critical moment. The two men that she commanded her *trusty Lords* to set before Naboth, were *two sons of Belial*; i. e. in plain language, the most worthless, wicked and hardened wretches, that they could find in any part of the kingdom for money---Such as would not scruple to swear according to the private directions, which they should receive from the servants of the *crown*. And thereby at once secure both honor and triumph to their *infernal father*, and their neighbour's *vineyard* to their Sovereign Lord the King.

Jezebel did all in her power to give the evidence of these *sons of Belial*, the appearance of truth. She ordered them to be placed *before him*, and to bear witness publicly against him in the *presence of all the people*†. It is

* Deut. 17, 6. Numb. 35, 30. † v. 13.

is often taken for granted, when a man gives evidence against his neighbour in a public manner, asserting all that he has to say of him before his face ;---that it must be all truth. However, the case of Naboth should make us careful, that we take nothing for granted, which requires proof ; especially, when the life, or even the property of a fellow creature is concerned. Foolish credulity, has been the cause of great destruction in the world !

We come now to consider the evidence which these sons of Belial were directed to give. The text informs us, that they were----*to bear witness against him, saying, thou didst blaspheme God and the king :---*There can be no great doubt, but half the charge before us was enough to send any man out of the world ;---especially, in such a pious reign as this !!! It is notorious, that in the most barbarous reigns recorded in the annals of this kingdom ; when hereticks were committed to the flames in every corner of the Island, the greatest pretensions were made to religion. The crown always took care to bring a long charge against them, consisting of all the important articles that the clergy, who then guided the conscience of the sovereign, could rake and scrape together. And they never failed to garnish the whole over with the NAME of God and the king. In this particular, Jezebel was not a whit behind the most *hypocritical roman catholic*, that ever disgraced human nature. The first part of the charge against Naboth was, that he had *blasphemed God*,---for which he was to suffer death according to the law. The command concerning blasphemy runs thus,----*He that blasphemeth the Name of the Lord, he shall surely be put*
to

*to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him**: ---By having the *sons of Belial* in readiness to support this part of the indictment; the queen got rid of one of the greatest enemies, to the courtly doctrine of *passive-obedience and non-resistance*. And by having the second part of the charge supported, viz. that he had also *blasphemed the king*; she secured the *vineyard* and all my Lord Naboth's estate to the king. If this charge had been true, he was certainly guilty of *high treason*; and in that case all his estate of course became the property of the crown for ever. The king it seems had set his heart upon it, and consequently nothing short of it could make him happy.

Jezebel did not wish her ministers to delay this matter, but as soon as the sons of Belial had delivered in their evidence, commanded *them to carry him out and stone him that he might die*. It is proper to remark here, that in ordering him to be carried out of the holy place, where they had been fasting, the queen discovered an outward respect for the commandment of God. Thus it is written in the law, *Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp,---and let all the congregation stone him*†. Therefore to keep up a shew of religion, she would not have the holy place polluted with the blood of this *republican*. And no doubt but the court party applauded her *piety* on this occasion.

It is high time to say something of the cruelty of the queen. She neither insisted on the witnesses proving the charge against him, by pointing out the time and place as the crown always should do out of regard for justice and humanity, when the prisoner is not allowed
a counsel

* Lev. 24, 16.

† Lev. 24, 14.

a counsel to plead for him ;---nor suffered Naboth to speak for himself. Her royal pleasure was, as soon as the evidence had been delivered against him, that he should forthwith be *carried out, and stoned that he might die.*

Jezebel discovered her bloody disposition, by commanding an innocent subject to be put to death. She very well knew him to have been an honest man ; and found it necessary in order to bring matters to bear, to entrust the secret of his *innocence* with her ministers. This was a dangerous experiment ! For if there had been but *one* honest man in the MINISTRY, it might have shook the THRONE to its very foundation. However, the queen either had substantial reasons to believe, that all his majesty's ministers would gladly obey the royal mandate, in hopes to be remembered and rewarded with some *sine-cures*, the first opportunity that offered ;---or else was so far bent on the death of Naboth, that she did not consider how dangerous it might prove to the *crown*. Her orders to the elders and nobles were,---*and then carry him out, and stone him that he may die.*

But what proves this *execrable queen* to have been the vilest of women is, her conduct towards the sons of Naboth, against whom no charge was brought. That they were put to death on this occasion, may be gathered from these words, *Surely, I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, said the Lord, and I will requite thee in this plat saith the Lord*.*---Jezebel knew that her conduct against Naboth, would most

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probably

* ii Kings, 9, 26.

probably rouse the friends of CIVIL LIBERTY, and therefore took care to provide for the worst that might happen ; either thro' a defection in the ministry, or the lawful demands of the people on the behalf of the *oppressed*. She therefore had the father and the sons put to death, and thereby secured the forfeited estate to the crown. The terrors of a guilty conscience, may help us to account for this piece of cruelty *.

There are several things in the conduct of Ahab towards Naboth, that may serve to put us in mind of our conduct towards the Americans.

1. The King of Israel wanted Naboth to part with his birth-right, contrary to the express command of God, which runs thus, *The land shall not be sold for ever ; for the land is mine* †,---So did we want the Americans to give up the best part of their birth-right, I mean, *civil liberty*, when we endeavoured to *tax* them contrary to their charters, &c. &c. &c.---2. As Ahab pretended to be very fair and reasonable in his proposals, offering Naboth for his vineyard, one that was considerably better ; ---and if that did not please him, to give him the full value of it in *money* ‡. So did we pretend that it was very reasonable to *tax* the Americans, because we had laid out so much money in protecting them. And many gave more credit to this, than they ever did to the gospel of Christ ; forgetting that the Americans did more than was expected from them in the last war. In the year 1754 they thought themselves able effectually to resist all the power of *France* ; and laid a plan for that purpose, which they afterwards sent over to England for the

* Prov. 28, 1.

† Lev. 25, 23.

‡ 1 Kings, 21. 2.

the approbation of Government. It was rejected*. Their conduct gave so much satisfaction to the late KING, that he sent a message to the House of Commons, requesting them to "enable his Majesty to give a proper compensation for the expences incurred by the respective provinces" in the last war†. Agreeable to this the parliament of Great Britain voted the sum of £235,719 2s. 10d. to be reimbursed to the Americans. This demonstrates the high opinion our late king had of his subjects on the other side of the Atlantic. In short, it is evident, that the very attempt to tax them *since*, was contrary to justice and sound policy. It was contrary to *justice*, because according to our excellent constitution, representation in parliament is the foundation of taxation: but the Americans were not represented in our Parliament, and therefore could not be *justly* taxed. It was also contrary to *sound policy*, because all their wealth in one way or other centered among us before. Could we expect more than their all? No: Was it not impolitical, contrary to the fundamental laws of our constitution, to run the risque of losing this part of the Empire,

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pire,

* See the Rev. Mr. Murray's History of the Amer. war. vol. 1, p. 45, 55, 56.

† The message referred to above, was sent to the House of Commons, with the usual preamble, on the 26th of April, 1759, and is as follows,

"GEORGE REX. His Majesty being sensible of the active zeal and vigor, with which his faithful subjects of NORTH AMERICA have exerted themselves in defence of his Majesty's just rights and possessions, recommends it to this house to take the same into consideration, and enable his Majesty to give a proper compensation for the expences incurred by the respective provinces in levying, cloathing and paying of the troops raised by the same, according as the active vigor and strenuous efforts of the respective provinces shall appear to merit."

G. R.

pire, by acts of oppression? Every one that had his eyes open foresaw the consequences of this *injustice*. And now they are actually come to pass. We have put them to the necessity of becoming their own manufacturers, and thereby lost the vast advantage which we enjoyed from their trade *---3. As Ahab by a scheme of devilish policy, formed by his beloved Jezebel, had this innocent man declared a *rebel*, having *blasphemed God and the King*; and had two men, sons of Belial to support this charge against him. So did we upon finding that the Americans would not tamely give up their *liberty*, declare them *rebels*. And the ministry to support their old design---found a considerable majority of the S-ns of B-li-l in the late inglorious House of Commons, to maintain the charge of rebellion brought against them. But then, that we may be able to form a proper judgment of the *virtue, truth and justice* of the late Parliament, it is necessary for us to recollect that in last April, they voted "that the influence of the crown had increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." But when the Lovers of their King and country went about to remedy this *evil*, which had so justly alarmed the nation; they were opposed and prevented, by a great number of the same *virtuous* persons who had passed *that vote*, but a few days before. There can be no great wonder that those gentry, who durst act so wickedly when they were on the point of returning home, to give an account of their conduct to their constituents, should, when the day of reckoning was distant from their view, declare the Americans REBELS.---4. As the eye of Ahab thro' all the proceedings of his queen against Naboth,

was

* See the Rev. Mr. Murray's Hist. of the Amer. war, vol. 1, p. 84,—100.

was upon the *vineyard*, and the quiet enjoyment of it without fee or reward ; and therefore suffered the father and his sons to be put to death. So ever since the Americans were declared *rebels*, our eyes have been steadfastly fixed on the enjoyment of their *estates* ; and therefore we have done all in our power to destroy them, by *killing*, *scalping* and *starving* the inhabitants. It is remarkable, that one who very strenuously opposed the American war in the House of Lords ; has since fought against them with all his might. What could have induced his Lordship to act so contrary to his professed principles of LIBERTY, unless, it was the prospect of possessing a *large estate* in America, can be known only to God and himself.

There are other particulars in the conduct of the court of Samaria towards, and its success against Naboth, which differ considerably from our conduct towards, and success against the Americans.

1. Ahab's ministers proclaimed a *fast* before Naboth was declared a *rebel* ; and had but one fast on the occasion. But our *virtuous* ministry disdained to fast, till they found by wretched experience that Heaven and earth were fighting against them. Since that time we have had five *fasts* in all. The sense of our prayers on these occasions, as far as they respected our brethren in the *New World*, may perhaps be given in these words,---
 " O Lord kill the Americans, or else they will kill us for our cruelty towards them." But of late we have drawn several powers in Europe about our heads, and therefore the form of our prayers must be somewhat altered.

2. It

2. It was Ahab's abandoned queen, that laid this hellish scheme to take away the life of Naboth.---But our most AMIABLE QUEEN had no hand either in laying the plan, or encouraging the war against America. It was both planned and put into execution by the ministry. And they have ruined thousands of families, if not the whole Empire, by it.

3. Ahab, for aught appears to the contrary from scripture, was successful in every part of his wicked purpose; and finished the whole of it in one day, without any expence to the nation. No doubt however, but many *shekels* were paid out of the privy purse, and divided between the ministry, and the sons of Belial whom they had procured to swear Naboth's life away. But, our ministry have been employing all the force they could, both by sea and land to kill the Americans for several years, with but little success. And by their mismanagement and obstinacy have added many millions to the national debt, and disgraced the English *name*. But these things we have reason to fear, are the *beginning* of sorrows.

4. Ahab got possession of the object of his desire *. But we are so far from getting possession of the object of our wishes, that there is *less* likelihood of it *now* than there was six years ago †. And yet we talk as *lavishly*, and live as luxuriously

* v. 19.

† The author does not pretend to foretell future events, but only to state facts that are notorious to the public. It is well known that in the Year 1778, the Earl of Carlisle, Mr. Eden and Governor Johnstone, went over as our commissioners to the Congress, and offered them far better terms than they had ever asked of the English Parliament

luxuriously as if we were at peace with all the world. O how deluded !---But to return: You will find by looking at the verses following the text, that the ministry complied with the queen's request in every particular; and when they had caused Naboth to be stoned agreeable to the royal command, sent her word of his death *. It seems that Jezebel had too much *policy* to appear publicly in this affair; and by that kept a hole for herself to creep out, in case of an attack. *Queen Elizabeth* followed her example in *this*, when she ordered the *fair queen of the Scots* to be beheaded. And this act of cruelty and wicked policy will leave an indelible stain on her reputation, to the latest posterity.

The consequences of this *hypocritical fast* were these.
 ---1. Ahab displeased the Lord by it.---*Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?---In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine†.*

2. He brought ruin upon himself and all his family.
Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity,---And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, Saying,
The

ment in any of their petitions, before the beginning of the war: and yet, their prayers then were rejected with scorn ‡. This will stand to all generations an EVERLASTING MONUMENT of the *folly* and *meanness* of our ministry. About that time, and since, several European powers declared for the United States of America. But whether things in the *end* terminate for, or against them, these considerations sufficiently justify what has been advanced above.

‡ See the Rev. Mr. Murray's Hist. of the Amer. war, vol. 2, p. 411,—415.

* v. 12,—14.

† v. 19.

The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city, the dogs shall eat : and him that dieth in the field, shall the fowls of the air eat.* This was a dear bought vineyard to him in the end ! The curse of God followed him and all his family thro' every part of the kingdom. This prophecy was fulfilled on himself. He died fighting against the Syrians,---*And the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood, according to the word of the Lord †--*

It was fulfilled on his son and successor in the throne, Ahaziah, who died by a fall---*through a lattice in his upper chamber ‡.*---His brother Jehoram also, who succeeded him, was killed by Jehu. *And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart,---Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite : for remember, how that when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him. Surely, I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, said the LORD, and I will requite thee in this plat saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the LORD §.*

This prophecy was literally fulfilled on Jezebel. *And Jehu said, Throw her down. So they threw her down ; and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses : and he trode her under foot. And they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull,*
and

* v. 21, 23, 24.

‡ ii Kings, 1, 2.

† chap. 22, 35, 38.

§ chap. 9, 24—26.

and the feet and the palms of her hands. And when they told the King of it,---He said, this is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field, in the portion of Jezreel, so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.*

The priests of Ahab, and their young masters shared in the common destruction of the family. This wicked king had seventy sons, brought up in Samaria, under the care of his nobles. The time was now changed:---there was a new king and ministry; and therefore the friends and relations of Ahab, who had displeased both God and men, could expect no favor. Jehu wrote a letter to the nobles of Samaria, requesting them to behead the young princes. *And it came to pass when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel. So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men (among whom his nefarious ministers may be included), and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left none remaining†.* Thus we have seen the nature, design and consequences of this *irreligious fast*, in many particulars. From the case of Ahab and his queen, we may see *that the triumphing of the wicked is short* indeed! Let this be a warning to every denomination of people against hypocrisy.

* ii Kings, 9, 33, 35—37.

† ii Kings, 10, 7, 11.

D REFLECTIONS.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

1. We see from what has been said of Ahab this evening, that his wickedness was great both towards God and men. He mounted the throne in a land, where the worship of JEHOVAH was established according to the law which he had given to Moses: and yet had the effrontery in a public manner to countenance, and worship idols.---*He reared up an altar for Baal, in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.---And did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, than all the kings of Israel that were before him**. His conduct in this and other particulars, may serve to put us in mind of the tyrannic reign and idolatry of *James the Second*.

2. From what has been said, we see the hypocrisy of Jezebel, in pretending so much regard for the true God, as to be sorry that his *name* was blasphemed. We may suppose, and perhaps without any breach of truth assert, that the ministry *then* might blaspheme in the royal presence with *impunity*. She opposed with all her might the true religion and the promoters of it†. It seems, there were only two sorts of sin punished with death in this reign; viz. worshipping the living God according to his word‡, and opposing the cursed doctrine of *passive obedience and non-resistance*§. Such as were guilty of these crimes had no mercy.

3. That hypocrites are detested both by God and men,
may

* i Kings, 16, 32, 33.

‡ v. 4.

† i Kings, 18, 13.

§ chap. 21, 3.

may be seen by Heaven and Earth's combining to punish the *execrable family* of Ahab. Their hypocritical fast answered but a poor purpose to the crown ! It is true, that Jezebel by this, made good her promise to the king ;--but *the dogs ate her flesh* for it afterwards. His majesty took possession of the *vineyard* ; but his triumph was *very short* ! Soon after the *dogs licked his blood, in the place where they had licked the blood of Naboth* before.

4. From what has been advanced, we see that the cruelty of kings and their ministers towards their fellow-creatures is, very displeasing to God. Read the scriptural account of despotic kings and their servants.---Consider their attempts to *oppress* and impose *taxes* on their subjects, contrary to justice and sound policy ;---and forget not their punishment*. Attend to the history of your own country, and reflect on the judgments which befell its wicked kings and their posterity. You know how England smarted for the inhuman massacre of the Danes :---that they were the first who made this nation pay *land-tax*.---And that they gave several kings to your ancestors. Did the unparalleled cruelty of *Edward the First*, towards the *Gambrians* and *Caledonians*, please God ? No : God gave him a fool for his son, who had neither sense nor power to execute his father's wicked purposes. But whilst you are enlarging on these hints in your mind, remember the side which PROVIDENCE took on this occasion :---how the Lord appeared for the distressed. Behold, in process of time the *Ancient Britons* gave a king to the English. This, with the blessings consequent upon it, afforded them some consolation for their past sufferings. Afterwards the *Scots* followed

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their

* chap. 12, 12--24.

their example. God now thought proper to give them also some compensation, for the hardships which they had endured from their old enemies; by putting it in their power to give a SCOURGE to their *oppressors*. Britain has reason to remember the *Stuarts*; for they have been a *curse* to the whole Island as long as any of them were suffered to reign over it. But the Lord who who had been executing judgment for the *oppressed** on this nation for many years, has since been very indulgent to us, by the accession of the present ILLUSTRIOUS FAMILY to the throne. *The friends of civil liberty* will with pleasure remember and repeat the glorious deeds of the GEORGES to the rising generations, as long as they can *read* and *speak* English. The NAME is *immortal* ! I could with joy enlarge on this pleasing theme ---but time forbids my doing it now. It is with a sorrowful heart I proceed to the next particular; however, conformable to custom on this occasion, and the expectation of my hearers, I must do it.

5. We see in our *own* condition at present, the dismal effects of sin and *obstinacy*. We are near *two hundred millions in debt*, and at war with *America, France, Spain and Holland*; without any ally to help us out of our distress. The protestant cause must suffer considerably from the present war; and popery gain in proportion by it. But this is not all; for every part of the nation suffers in some shape or other. Witness the distresses that present themselves daily to our view in this part of the kingdom.

This city, was once very respectable on several accounts. I have read of it with pleasure before I had the honor to be

* Ifn. 146, 7.

be one of its inhabitants. The foundation of its greatness was laid by the policy of QUEEN ELIZABETH.---And the superstructure was raised very high by the prudence, carefulness and activity of the citizens, with the blessings of Providence on their labours. Their poor lived better before the commencement of this unnatural war, than many freeholders do. Their children at seven years of age in many instances, were able to find themselves. They supplied *English America*, and a great part of *Europe* with their manufactures. They increased in wealth and reputation daily;---till this unhappy war broke out. Their trade now is so far dwindled away, that men of *probity*, and once of great *property* find it very difficult to live. The poor by this suffer exceedingly! Hundreds of them are out of employ. They are obliged to fast several times in the week, for want of food!---And to walk about like idle persons, to pass away the time, because they have nothing else to do. These are only hints by the way---no tongue can fully describe their wretched situation!

It is true, that in this dismal state of affairs, some things have been recorded in Rivington's Gazette, which are calculated to raise the spirits of the public. But be the truth of this as it may, it is a query with the sensible part of the nation, whether any of the little advantages hitherto gained over the Americans, can in the end be good news to us?---Thus far, it is certain, they have only served to protract our misery. We have tried for several years to kill the Americans, to very little purpose. Can we then, think you, expect any success without a change of measures? Judge of these things by the event.---

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Let us ever remember, that Jehovah is just in all his ways. And therefore if the Americans are, what *ministerial tools* represent them to be ; the Lord will severely punish them in one way or other. But on the contrary, if we wrong and oppress the Americans, God will call us to an account, and make us smart for every drop of innocent blood, which we have shed in this war. Thus it is written in the oracles of truth, *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed**:---And if so, we have abundant reason for our own sakes, for the sake of our children and that of our native country to cry out, *Lord have mercy upon us!*

But however, things may turn out in this world, the real followers of God, shall be supported under every trial, and ere long be removed from this fluctuating state to the full enjoyment of their REDEMER above, Amen.

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* Gen. 9, 6.

F I N I S.

